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THE ANNUNCIATION

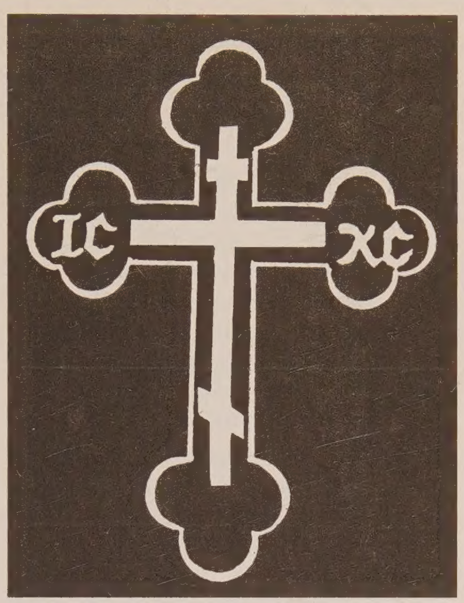
We observe Annunciation Day on March 25/April 7. It commemorates the archangel's announcement to Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah. The word "annunciation" tells it all – in both Russian and Greek it means "good news" or "joyful tidings." News that the emancipation of man from sin and eternal death has begun. We sing this in the tropar/hymn for the day: "Today is the beginning of our salvation."

This Holy Day is regarded as one of the greatest on the Church Calendar – as it is the beginning of the process which will bring about Christ's coming on earth. – His Nativity or Christmas.

This day usually falls during Great Lent. However, its celebration takes precedence over the usual grave Lenten observance. A Divine Liturgy is served, the clergy wear bright colored vestments and the hymns tell of the gladness of our coming salvation. In Orthodox countries, the day was kept almost more than any other, except for Easter. There were many legends pertaining to it. One was that even the birds did not build their nests on this day, as they were busy praising the Lord in prayer. Another was that the swallows return from migration on this day so no farmer would ever kill a swallow or destroy their nests. (Do the swallows return to Capistrano on this day?)

This is a scriptural event and we can read about it in Luke 1:24-38. Luke tells us that the Archangel Gabriel appeared before her with the greeting: "Hail, Thou full of grace! The Lord be with Thee, blessed art Thou among women." The blessed Virgin was awed by the sight of the

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WHY COULDN'T ALL ORTHODOX CHURCHES USE THIS CROSS AS AN IDENTIFIER?

CROSS SUNDAY

Halfway through Great Lent? Yes, it starts on February 27 and on March 26 we commemorate Cross Sunday, which is a sign that Great Lent is half over. We go to church and find the cross, beautifully decorated with live flowers and greens displayed in the center of the church for our veneration. We are reminded of the upcoming crucifixion of the Lord and it is given as a sign to strengthen us to continue in our Lenten struggles.

The cross will be displayed in the church for the whole week. We may not visit it there, but we can decorate a cross at home for veneration. If not we can at least add this prayer to our daily prayers this week.

"Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship. O Master, and Thy Holy Resurrection, we glorify."

* * * * * *

Don't wait for six strong men to take you to church.

WHAT IS IT?

If we look at our wall calendars for March 11, which is the first Saturday of Great Lent, we will see printed "Blessing of Kolivo/Theodore Saturday." What do these words mean?

During the first week of Great Lent, fasting is very strict. The services in the church are frequent and very long. On the first four days, the penitential canon of St. Andrew of Crete is read. It has nine odes, which present to us all the chief figures of the Old Testament plainly presenting their good and bad deeds and giving us warnings of what not to follow and examples of good we are to emulate. Each verse has a refrain which is sung like a sad dirge: "Have mercy upon me, Lord, have mercy." The first stanza of each of the odes is sung to very mournful music and urges us to repent. Many poklonie or full prostrations, with forehead to the ground, are made at this service. Mourning and repentance are the theme.

The emperor Julian "the Apostate" who had embraced Christianity in his youth had denied his Christianity upon becoming emperor. Not only did he begin to worship idols but he became a great persecutor of his former Christian brothers.

He knew that Christians fasted during Great Lent and especially the first week of Lent. He also knew that they spent much time in church at services as they were preparing themselves for receiving the sacrament of Holy Confession and Communion. He also knew that after this week of strict fast, the Christians had to buy food at the market. Therefore, Emperor Julian secretly ordered the governor of Constantinople to sprinkle all the food at the marketplace with the blood of

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CHRONOLOGY

MARCH 2006

SS MARY AND MARTHA MONASTERY, 65 Spinner Lane, Wagener, SC 29164 has released the schedule for its events for 2006. For more information write to the address or call 803/564-6894. Youth Retreats for 12-14-year-olds - June 14-17, for 15-17-year olds - June 21-24. Clergy Wives' Retreat - Sept. 21-24.

NATIONAL CLERGY RENEWAL PROGRAM offers grants of up to $45,000 to Christian congregations across the nation to allow their pastors time away from the daily demands of parish ministry. Up to $15,000 of that amount may be used for congregational activities during a pastor's absence. Info and application available at www.lillyendowment.org or call 317/916-7350 or e-mail clergyrenewal@yahoo.com or write to Lilly Endowment, 2801 N. Meridian St., Indianapolis, IN 46208. The deadline for proposals is May 15, 2006.

TRAVEL THROUGH THE ORTHODOX YEAR is an activity book designed for children 8-13. It is packed with valuable information, theology and practices. Adults will find much that is new and interesting in this book. Some use it as a test of their knowledge. Order from St. Nicholas Monastery, 1340 Piney Road, North Fort Myers, FL 33903-3830 or call 239/995-3060. The book sells for $6.95 plus $1.40 P&H. There is a quantity discount.

A MEDICAL CLINIC AND SCHOOL is being built in Ambo, Ethopia by IOCC. The six-room clinic will focus on free medical care to HIV and AIDS infected Orthodox children and orphans. Less than half of Ethopians have access to health services. The National Philoptochos Board voted to fund financial support of $60,000 for this project.

PASCHA/EASTER CARDS in English, Slavonic or multi-language are available from Orthodox Christian Greeting Cards, PO Box 20001, York, PA 17402.

SEVEN MEMBERS OF POLAND'S ORTHODOX CHURCH were decorated with the country's Gold Cross of Merit for work in ecumenism and social work in a ceremony in Warsaw's presidential palace. The 570,000 members of Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Poland has frequently complained of discrimination in Poland.

2006 MISSION TEAMS are now being set up by the Orthodox Christian Mission Center in St. Augustine, FL to travel around the world on short or long-term mission work. This work may include teaching, youth ministry, renovation, construction and health care outreach. If you wish to volunteer your services, time and talents on an Orthodox mission team, call toll-free 1-877-463-6784 or e-mail Team@ocmc.org. Applications can be downloaded on http://www.ocmc.org/teams.php.

HILLWOOD MUSEUM AND GARDENS just off Rock Creek Parkway in Washington, DC was the last residence of the heir to the Post cereal fortune Marjorie Merriweather Post (1887-1937). It showcases a remarkably comprehensive collection of Russian imperial fine and decorative art – probably the finest collection outside Russia. It includes imperial porcelain portraits, gold, silver, Russian Orthodox icons, vestments, religious objects, and pieces by Faberge. The museum is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday by reservation. Call 202/686-8500 or www.hillwoodmuseum.org. It is located at 4155 Linnaen Ave. NW.

A SURVEY OF PARISHES IN THE WEST was done by Alexey Krindatch of Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute. Parishes of the Greek Orthodox Church in America, Antiochian, and Serbian Church were questioned. The results show that 50% of the Serbian, 32% of the Greek, 19% of the Antiochian and 6% of the OCA parishes reported that they had strong ethnic heritage that they are trying to preserve. Size of parishes varied from 750 persons in Greek, 225 in Serbian, 209 in Antiochian and 165 in OCA parishes. The entire survey can be found on www.orthodoxinstitute.org.

A CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY HERITAGE TOUR will be led by John Righetti to Poland, Slovakia, and Ukraine from June 19-July 3. For info contact John at president@c-rs.or or call 412/749-0675.

BOTH UKRAINE AND BULGARIA are considering mandatory religious education in high schools in their countries. Surveys are being done and proposals have been presented to their respective governmental authorities.

THE MONASTIC COMMUNITIES ON MOUNT ATHOS differ as to reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church. The 117 fathers of Esphigmenou Monastery are being pressured and persecuted according to their website. All banking privileges have been frozen and the monastery is enduring a siege. Their supplies are dwindling and their telephone was cut off in October.

SWISS SCHOLARS have petitioned the European Parliament to ask that Istanbul's famous sixth-century Church of Hagia Sophia, now used as a museum, be restored for Christian worship before Turkey joins the European Union. Turkey is trying to convince the European Union it deserves membership by 2015.

THE COUNTRY OF GEORGIA was a mighty military, cultural and ecclesiastical force 800 years ago. Its priests, artists and church-builders were active and respected from Jerusalem to the Balkans. Modern Georgia has pledged to keep a wary eye on every place in Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Israel where churches, inscriptions and frescoes testify to its golden age. They are troubled by a loss of Georgian icons and frescoes which were under the Patriarch of Jerusalem's care, and which were found on the art market. They hope matters will improve under the new Patriarch.

(Continued from front page)
THE ANNUNCIATION

Angel and wondered what he meant. The Angel then told her that she had found grace with God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit would give birth to a Son, Who would be called the Son of God. The Virgin Mary, always humble and obedient to the will of God, replied: "I am the Lord's handmaiden, so be it unto me according to thy word."

The tropar/hymn tells us: "Today is the beginning of our salvation and the revelation of the mystery which is from eternity: the Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaimeth good tidings of grace. Let us, therefore, cry out with him to the Birthgiver of God, Rejoice, thou that art full of grace, the Lord is with Thee!"

(Continued from front page)
WHAT IS IT?

the sacrificed animals so as to desecrate it for the Christians who would unknowingly eat it.

St. Theodore learned of this and he sent word to the Christians through the Patriarch Eudoxius of Constantinople not to buy any food at the market, but to use the grain they had in reserve at home and to eat boiled wheat with honey, which is known as kolivo. In remembrance of this event, the Orthodox Church has established the special day. Kolivo is blessed and given to the people after the Divine Liturgy on this first Saturday of Great Lent.

CONFESSION

Many people receive Holy Communion at each Divine Liturgy but they are gradually neglecting to have their confessions heard. They are short changing themselves. As sinners we need God's grace and mercy and must live in a way that reflects this truth. Without self-examination, there is no progress in the spiritual life.

After you have searched your soul and left no stone unturned, acknowledgement and confession of sin is the next step. Many spiritual writers have compiled an "examination of conscience" to prepare yourself for sacramental confession. These lists are very valuable aids designed to move the penitent from sorrow for sin into liberation, hope, inner peace and resolution. Just as we are told to "hate the sin and love the sinner," don't focus on the sins that you have confessed for too long, otherwise this will lead you into despair. Once a sin is confessed and absolution is pronounced, don't mentally dig up the dead carcass. Just like at a funeral, the grave of the loved one is sealed by the priest "until the second Coming of Christ," do not open your casket of your past sins that has been sealed with the sign of the Cross. Only at Christ's Second and Glorious Coming will the "books be opened and all hidden things revealed" (Kondak of Meat-Fare Sunday).

You do not know how much time is remaining in your earthly life. Time is short; your soul may be required of you this night. (Luke 12:20) Do not hide any sin from Him just as Adam did in the Garden of Eden because in reality, He knows it already! The Rite of Confession states that if you conceal any transgression "you will have the greater sin." The Prophet King David even mentions that sin left unconfessed can negatively effect your physical health. "When I did not declare my sin, my body wasted away" (Psalm 32:3). God only asks that you come to Him in brokenness, give your faults to Him and have a firm intention not to sin again. If you should later stumble again, God is pleased with you getting up, dusting yourself off and starting all over.

Introspection is a vital step toward renewing your life in Christ. Confess your sins and place them at the foot of the Cross where there is a total remission of sins. It's time to say, "Yes, God is big enough to forgive my every sin."

–Raymond J. Mastroberte

BIBLE QUIZ

1. What king of Judah proclaimed a fast when the Moabites attacked?
2. What king fasted all day and night while unsuccessfully inquiring of the Lord?
3. Who fasted and wore sackcloth as he prayed for the liberation of his people from Persia?
4. What church's elders fasted before sending Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries?
5. In what country were the Jews when they fasted after learning of an executive order to have them all killed?
6. Whose death caused the people of Jabesh-gilead to fast for seven days?
7. After Ezra had read the law to the people, what was the main sin that caused them to sin?

ANSWERS:
1. Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:1-4)
2. Saul (1 Samuel 28:20)
3. Daniel (9:3-4)
4. Antioch (Acts 13:1-3)
5. Persia (Esther 4:1-3, 15-16)
6. Saul's and Jonathan's (1 Samuel 31:13)
7. Marrying foreigners (Nehemiah 9:1-3)

FITNESS TRAINING

Physical fitness is pervasive in our age. It seems that everyone is either going to the gym, walking, exercising at home or talking about needing to start.

The Bible has quite a bit to say about spiritual fitness. The writer of Psalm 119 saw the importance of daily spiritual exercise. He loved the Word of God, meditated on it throughout the day and obeyed it. His prayers were from his heart, and his hope for each day came directly from God's word as he tells us in verses 97 to 104. "O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day..."

How much more spiritually healthy we would be if we engaged in a Godly fitness training program! Why not start today?

ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Maria,

Tak tam kolo vas? Toot not so good. Shitke my-youth colds again. I guess toh yeh season nah toh, Remember zhe yah pesala zeh me next door neighbor, totah shto dumah zhe ohna take special? Well me maleeh takee incident last week. Yeh staree dostal grip. Ohn takee hvoree but ohn neh let her callovateee doctorah boh ohn kazheh zhe ohn mah takee dumkey zhe first step go to doctor, then doctor send you to hospitalyah, then you get sicker, then you die, then undertaker take you back home. Ohneh mayut takee fights, Ohna yemyu zazhe zhe ohn crazy. Ohn yeh kazheh zhe his mother told him that and she can't be wrong. Neighbor dumah zhe own too sick to argue with.

Anyway, ohnah neh znah what she gotta do, boh ohn tak yoyka-yeh ee yoyka-yeh. Ohna dumah zhe ohna scrazuyeh. Finally, ohna calluyeh menyeh nah telephonee kazhe me: "Anne can you help me? I'm desperate. My husband is driving me crazy. You people seem to have so many home remedies. Can you help my husband? You can use anything but your famous garlic cure."

Yah bulla take nice, yak me baba taught me. Noh yah seeing red kolee ohna kazheh me "you people." Noh yah yah doing good. Yah peeshlah doh neighbor eeh buduy treatovatee yeh staree yak nashee ludee treatovalee colds.

Yah peeshla with torbah filled with "you people" leckarstva. Persheh, yah pomazala yeho throat eeh hrudee with vicks. Then yah poklala stare piece flannel nah top. Then yah dala yehmyu nose drops. Yah plugged in me vaporizer ee put in zelyah. Then yah fixovala yehmuh hot chai ee blackberry venoh that yah had made last summer. Yah talking tak nice ee soothing yak doh dedchachko, yah pulled down the shades ee yah yemuh saying that ohne budeh sweat ee not to worry boh ohn budeh feeling better.

Yah peeshla domu. Later, me neighbor klechalla me to come over boh yh husband looked and felt like a new man.

Yah guess zhe me next door neighbor znah zhe "you people" know a lot noh ohnah can't admit it. I'd rather show her if only I had goose grease!

Proud to be one of "you people."
Hanya

FIFTY YEARS AGO
March 1956 issue

The issue had many Lenten articles. Great Lent started on March 19 and Pascha/Easter was May 6. Reading this issue, the contrast with today is evident. It was hard-hitting. Articles by Fr. John Dzubay and Bishop Nicholas of Alaska were not "politically correct." Fr. John wrote on the "House of the Lord" in which he said: "The saints made great sacrifices for the blessed privilege of becoming dwellers and children of the House of the Lord." He then enumerated some of these sacrifices.

Bishop Nicholas's homily was delivered in San Francisco on 20 February 1895 on the Sunday of the "Triumph of the Orthodox Church." We now call this Sunday "The Sunday of Orthodoxy." It is more than a matter of nuance. Reading this article, it was easy to see why Orthodox were so firm in their faith. He said it "as it is."

This issue continued the impression of a church that was alive! It wrote of five churches which were under construction: Monessen and Donora in Pennsylvania, Cassville, New Jersey Reed Farm, New York and Phoenix, Arizona. There were four parishes which had finished plans and would soon start to build: Endicott and Binghamton, New York, Gary, Indiana and Passaic, New Jersey. It was also noted that the National Council on Scouting had recognized Eastern Orthodoxy as the 4th major faith and had approved the Eastern Orthodoxy award of Alpha Omega. We also found that the Orthodox young people had formed a pan-Orthodox group, Council of Eastern Orthodox Youth CEOYLA and a meeting was to be held in May.

There was a sad note concerning a fire which had destroyed the interior of St. Vladimir Church in Lopez, PA on August 21, 1955. The church had just been refurbished on the day before and everything was destroyed: the stained glass windows, new altar covers, lamps, carpeting, vestment, books, etc. The parish members were devastated! Metropolitan Leonty asked our readers to help them restore their church. This is especially critical since the church is the only Orthodox Church for miles around. According to the article, they should celebrate their 100th anniversary this year.

We continued the history of the Orthodox Church in America by Basil Bensin. He wrote about the era of Metropolitan Theopholis, who was elected as head of the church at the Cleveland Sobor in 1934. It was a difficult time in the church and he was to become known as a peacemaker. He spoke Serbian fluently and visited Yugoslavia in 1935, where he was given many rewards not only by the church but by the government. While there, he conferred with the members of the Church Outside of Russia, which had been given a haven in Serbia.

FUNDS

The cost of postage has gone up again. Two cents on one piece of mail doesn't seem like much but it adds up on thousands of pieces of mail. Thank you for your help.

<u>POSTAGE</u>: Anna Hershey, Sophie Nahorniak, Dorothy Shakun, Tillie Porter, Olga Orzak, Sharon Schrenzel, Metro Siuniak, Betty Weaver, members of All Saints Church in Wolf Run, OH, Joseph C. Milosevich, Sr.

<u>ALASKA</u>: Ethel Watlock

<u>MISSION</u>: Father Vladimir and Matushka Lecko.

<u>BOTH ALASKA AND MISSION</u>: Phil Schiffbauer, S.F. Young, Stephen T. Murray

LIGHTER MOMENT

Johnny's mother ran into the bedroom when she heard him scream. She found his two-year-old sister pulling his hair. She gently relaxed the little girl's grip and said to Johnny: "There, there. She doesn't know that hurts." Mother was barely out of the room when the little girl screamed. Rushing back into the room, she asked Johnny: "What happened.?

"She knows now," Johnny replied.

Memories

SUCH FOND ORTHODOX MEMORIES!

Growing up, I, with two older brothers and a younger sister, along with my parents lived with my grandparents ... our Baba and Dede. Religion and traditions of the Eastern Orthodox faith played a major part in our lives. In 1916, my grandfather was one of the founders of St. Mary's Orthodox Church in the village of Ganister, some 20 miles southeast of Altoona, PA. Attending, and actively participating in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays, and the many church holidays, was not only expected of us, but just accepted as the thing to do. Dede was the church cantor, and we boys were altar boys.

As children, I'm not sure we realized, or appreciated, the positive influence and disciplined lifestyle our grandparents and parents gave us. It prepared us well for the realities of adulthood. The practicing of our Orthodox faith, and their tender teaching, gave us the much needed inner strength in our adult years.

Of the many religious traditions we celebrated, Easter was my favorite. It all started weeks before the actual holiday by keeping the Lent. That meant lots of meatless meals, lots of potatoes, pierogies, fish... And, of course, no listening to music! As Good Friday neared, it was major cleanup time; housecleaning, window washing, and even white-washing (a lime and water mixture) all the tree trunks of the trees in the orchard ... and the chicken coop! Holy Thursday services, with the reading of the 12 gospels, seemed never to end for us younger ones, all in Slavonic, of course. Good Friday services were more enjoyable. It meant getting out of school earlier, and the procession around the church was excitingly different for me, the youngest altar boy.

Getting prepared for Easter Sunday meant cooking the special foods that would be taken to the church to be blessed. Meats, cheeses, butter, and that special bread "Paska," the pride of each woman when displayed at Easter. Can't forget the Easter Eggs!

We made the decorative eggs the old-fashioned way. Beeswax was melted in a container (I remember it being an empty sardine can) on top of the coal stove. The design was applied to the egg by placing the hot wax to it with a nail (finishing nails worked best). The egg was then dipped into a homemade dye. Did you know that you can make brown dye by boiling onion skins? The wax was then scraped off, leaving a dyed egg with a white design.

Easter sunrise service was joyous! How wonderful it was to first hear the priest greet us with "Christ is Risen," and us all responding with "Indeed He is Risen." After the liturgy, the baskets of food were blessed... they were placed in a circle on the church lawn. As the altar boy, I tagged along behind the priest with a basket, and people either gave money or a blessed egg to the priest. Then home we would go.

Since we never ate before the service, by this time we were famished. At home, the meal started by Dede giving all of us a piece of the blessed egg. Finally! It was time to eat that great food. Would you believe we ate cheeses, and even kielbasa, at eight in the morning, and loved it!

Growing up with the Orthodox religion and traditions surely had an influence on us. It now seems so natural, as an adult, to have that "special feeling" at holiday times. That's probably why one sees so many people in church at Easter that don't seem to be there other times. Might be a wonderful idea to invite them to share your Easter basket... because it's in their hearts if they grew up with it.

Bob Cramer

Please send your MEMORIES to Margaret Pysarchyk at 2125 Garfield St., Lorain, OH 44055 or mpysarchyk@hotmail.com

WINTER'S GRACE

All of us are bound to repeat ourselves as we go about our daily routine. We tend to follow the same routine. Time after time we eat, sleep, read the paper, have the same breakfast, and clean up in the same way. We can lose our enthusiasm for life if "there is no new thing under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9) in our lives.

However, there is another way to view life. The world may be likened to a stage on which the drama of eternity is unfolded. We are the actors. The sun rises and falls like a great curtain day after day, and every time we "repeat our lines" we make a decision. We either respond to the cues of our daily circumstances just to get our part over with, or we look at our role in life as a wonderful opportunity to know and enjoy the goodness and wisdom of the great Director as given in Ecclesiastes 5:18-20 and 12: 13-14. "Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth Him; for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God giveth riches and wealth, and giveth him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God. For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart. ... Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

As we do the same thing over and over, as we participate in this repetitive activity, character is formed, faith is strengthened, hope is increased, and endurance is developed. Through the normal course of events, God is saying to us that there is more to our earthly existence than the meaningless round of duties and the same routing day after day.

Part of God's plan for us is that we yield to His guidance in ordinary events that occur over and over again. Repeatedly trusting the Lord is by far the surest way to make life routinely fresh. As Macbeth said: "I wonder what I did for God today: How many times did I once pause and pray? But I must find and serve Him in these ways, For life is made of ordinary days."

SOBORNOST

The Meaning of Ecumenical Councils

Without a doubt, the seven Ecumenical Councils occupy a unique and highest place of priority in the theology of *sobornost.* In the words of Meyendorff:

> The interpretative and ordering authority of the Mystery of the Christian Tradition belonged to the Councils. The glorious Creed of Nicea-Constantinople, the conciliar definitions, the holy canons and the Liturgies will forever stand as proof of our view. To no patriarch of the undivided Church in East and West was recognized the prerogative to confirm, or veto, or reject, or change, the findings and the decisions of the Fathers, reached, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, in Ecumenical Councils, which were the criterion of Truth, in the accord of the Fathers and the faithful.

This pre-eminence necessitates an accurate understanding of the definition and meaning of an "Ecumenical Council." In particular, a clear distinction needs to be made between the "Ecumenical" or "Imperial" Council of centuries past and the modern usage of the term "ecumenical council."

Father Georges Florovsky tells us that in the historical context of the Roman and Byzantine Empire, the Ecumenical Council is an "Imperial" Council. Since the time of Constantine, or more correctly, since the reign of Emperor Theodosius I, the Christian Church is co-extensive with the christened empire of the Roman and Byzantine commonwealth. A general council of this empire, then, is called an "ecumenical," universal or imperial council *(Reichskonzile).*

Metropolitan Maximos (Aghiorgoussis) explains that Ecumenical Councils, like all traditional councils, are councils of bishops only, since only bishops have "power" over other bishops. Ecumenical Councils are distinguished from those which preceded Constantine by two features: they were convoked by the emperor, and their decisions were held to be laws of the empire. In the words of Metropolitan Maximos:

> The ecumenicity of the council is derived from the Emperor, who convenes the council. In fact, the Emperor invites whomever he wishes to the council, with practically no protest from his bishops. Whenever a conflict does arise between the Emperor and a bishop, the Emperor invariably holds sway. One example takes place in 553, when Justinian proceeds with his Fifth Ecumenical Council in spite of Pope Vigilius' refusal to participate. Actually, none of the Councils includes all the bishops of the imperial church, which means that none is strictly ecumenical from the point of view of its composition. For example, only a few Western bishops are invited by Theodosius to attend the Third Ecumenical Council (431) in Ephesus, along with the provincial metropolitans of the Eastern Empire and some of their suffragan bishops.
>
> Moreover, the historically proven fact that the Emperor both convened and provided the agenda for the Councils indicates that the bishops themselves acknowledged the Emperor's right to legislate over the councils. Thus, the Councils never legislated on themselves, since they evidently did not assume the right to do so.

Fr. Michael Dahulich, Ph.D.
Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary

SHAKE THE DUST

So many of our sayings have a Biblical connection. For example: "Shake the dust from your feet," meaning to leave something behind permanently. References can be found in Matthew 10:14 also in Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5 and Acts 13:51. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house, or city, shake off the dust of your feet."

There was an ancient Jewish custom of shaking the dust of the road from one's feet upon returning to Palestine from travels to pagan lands – places where even the dust of the road was considered unclean.

Undique (from everywhere)

After receiving Holy Communion, diluted wine and a piece of prosphora are usually offered to wash the Holy Particles from your mouth. Only one piece of bread should be taken and only a sip of wine. You are not to drain the cup!

Live each day so that you will neither be afraid of tomorrow nor ashamed of yesterday.

St. John Chrysostom said: "The entire sanctuary and space around the altar are filled with the heavenly powers who come to honor Him Who is present on the altar."

The only book of the New Testament which is not read liturgically in the Orthodox Church is the Book of Revelation.

St. Basil said: "A tree is known by its fruit, a man by his deeds. A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love."

The Orthodox Church and the Western Church both have a 40-day Great Lent but they are calculated differently. The Orthodox Church starts Great Lent on a Monday and ends it on Lazarus Saturday – the day before Palm Sunday. The Western Church starts on a Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday.

When we teach our children to be good, to be gentle, to be forgiving (all these are attributes of God), to be generous, to love their fellow men, to regard this present age as nothing, we instill virtue in their souls and reveal the image of God within them. This, then, is our task: to educate both ourselves and our children in godliness; otherwise, what answer will we have before Christ's Judgement Seat?

Legend has it that at the Annunciation the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary at 6 p.m. This is why church bells are rung at this time.

Holy Days begin at sundown 6 p.m. on the day before the calendar day. Vespers are sung for the coming day. For example, Annunciation is found on March 25/April 7. After 6 p.m. on March 24/April 6 the vesper service honors the Annunciation.

Editor's Notes

From Forgiveness Sunday to Pascha/Easter morning our Lenten journey is different every year because we are different every year. As our understanding of God's Word deepens, our faith in Him grows and our relationships with others reflect more of God's love. To meet our changing spiritual needs as we go down the path to greater spiritual maturity – no matter what our age or in what stage – we try to participate in as much of the service as possible. And the church schedule is so full – from the Canon of St. Andrew, Acafists, Soul Saturdays, Paraclesis, Mission Services, Pre-Sanctified Liturgies, etc. Then there is our own rules of prayer and religious readings and meditations which are intensified during this period. Fasting from food constantly reminds us to stay on the path and lastly, our increase in alms: the giving to others or to a good cause. Where do we find ourselves this year? Have we progressed any since last year?

In one of the past Editor's notes, I had asked for suggestions on types of articles that would be most appreciated. I received many responses which I have taken into consideration. Most wanted more on what could be classified as church etiquette. I hope to start a column on this. Thank you for taking the time to write or call.

The "Memories" column by Margaret Pysarchyk has brought out the influence "Babas"/grandmothers have had on the lives of so many. They may not have been highly educated women – but they taught so much! Perhaps, in this day and age when there does not seem to be any guidelines for grandmothers, they wear stylish clothes, leave home to shop, go to club meetings and out to eat. Have they somehow, along the way, given up teaching the young about God?

This month, I thank Helen Novasadko, who sponsored a packet of "Heralds." She takes the effort of sending some of the copies to those who are infirm and cannot make it to church. How pleased they must be to receive a copy each month with a small personal note enclosed. They may be housebound, but they are not forgotten. We can each "Brighten the Corner" in some way.

May you continue on your Lenten Path so that you may have a good Lent and that you may greet the Resurrection.

Matushka Nina

PRESS FUND

Thank you for "all things." Your help with the funds, the phone calls and notes, the ordering of gift subscriptions, the sponsoring of a packet of "Heralds" either for your parish or a mission parish. Spasebo.

John Spack, M. Zacharkiw, Nina Hershey, Everett Ray Greene, Olga Dzembo, Dr. Dimitrios Pappas, Susan Boris, Anonymous (2), Kathryn Barker, Apollo and Elizabeth Manchuk, Catherine Shaffchick, Ethel Watlock, Anna Dorozynski, Anita Anderson, Irene Allen, Paul Brenia, Afton Chowansky, Eleanora Latyszonski, The Brotherhood of the Monastery of All Saints of North America. Charles R. Smith in memory of Fr. Basil and John Rhenish. Linda Smith in thanksgiving for the continued health of family.

Michael Bondarchuk in memory of parents Fr. Averky and Matushka Bondarchuk.

Helen Lesko for health of Matushka Nina.

The Prevites in memory of Baba Podish and Stella Sahonich.

Mary Palushuk for prayers.

Matushka Nina and Betty Kovach prayers for George Walko and his Lenten podvig. (Making hand and wall crosses which he gladly donates to churches and homes all over the world. The crosses can be found on many altars.)

Joseph C. Milosevich, Sr. in memory of his wife, Mildred, who died one year ago on March 5.

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

Whenever possible, arrive a little early. This will give you time to venerate the icons, light your candles, say your prayers, and meditate. Sit quietly and "let the peace of God rule in your heart," so that you can better pray the Divine Liturgy. During the service, make the sign of the cross, bow when asked and pay attention. Do not talk with others or read the bulletin.



Often we make a variation on an original. It is not as tasty, but it's faster and a lot less trouble. We never think to share these short cut recipes. One such is for the world-known peroshki. Here is the recipe for Perenas. I would not think of calling them speedy peroshki.

PERENAS

1 container Hungry Jack flaky biscuits (10)
1/2 medium cabbage
1 medium onion
2 Tbls. oil

Saute the finely chopped onion in the oil until light yellow. Add the finely chopped cabbage. Salt and pepper to taste. Fry over low heat until soft, mixing occasionally. Cool. Remove dough from container and separate biscuits on a lightly floured surface. Working with one biscuit at a time, either roll out or flatten and stretch into a 3-inch circle. Place one teaspoon of cabbage or other filling in center. Bring up outer edges and pinch together to form a small roll. Place pinched edge down on greased cookie sheet - 2 inches apart. Bake at 375° for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. Upon removing from oven can brush with oleo. May be frozen and reheated. Can be eaten at room temperature. Good for lunch boxes.

SPINACH FILLING: 1/2 pkg. frozen chopped spinach. Thaw. Squeeze out most of moisture. Saute one small, chopped onion in 2 Tbls. of oil. Add spinach. May add pinch of nutmeg, salt and pepper.

* * * * * *

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FASTING

As a spiritual discipline, fasting is intended to be just that – a discipline. The ancients wisely realized that restricting food and drink was a way to sharpen awareness on many levels. Food fasts, especially rigorous ones, serve to heighten the senses. And because eating is pleasurable, food fasts can indeed induce "suffering."

Never mind that St. John the Baptist allegedly subsisted on a diet of wild locusts and honey, extreme restriction or deprivation will not necessarily make you holier and may, in fact, make you sick. Starving is not fasting. Nowhere, either in scripture or church teaching, are we asked to fast at the expense of health. St. John Chrysostom wrote: "If your body is not strong enough to continue fasting all day, no wise man will reprove you; for we serve a gentle and merciful Lord Who expects nothing of us beyond our strength.

The Church in her wisdom exempts those who are ill or have been diagnosed with an eating disorder. If this is the case, try fasting from the Internet, daily news reports or talking on your cell phone. In fact, this would be wise for all of us.

LIGHTER MOMENT

His wife's 50th birthday was coming up. She dreamt of a little, red sportscar. Time to live it up! She said to her husband: "I want something that goes from 0 to 200 in just a few seconds." He got her what she wanted! For her birthday, he bought her a brand new bathroom scale. Nobody has seen or heard from him since.

Home Bible Reading Schedule

MARCH 2006

1. Joel 2:12-26
2. Luke 23:2-34,44-56
3. Zechariah 8:19-23
4. Matthew 6:1-13
5. **Matthew 6:14-21**
6. Proverbs 1:1-20
7. Proverbs 1:1-20-33
8. Proverbs 2:1-22
9. Proverbs 3:1-18
10. Proverbs 1:19-34
11. Mark 2:23-3:5
12. **John 1:43-51**
13. Proverbs 3:34-4:22
14. Proverbs 5:1-15
15. Proverbs 5:15-6:4
16. Proverbs 6:3-20
17. Proverbs 6:20-7:1
18. Mark 1:35-44
19. **Mark 2:1-12**
20. Proverbs 8:1-21
21. Proverbs 8:32-9:11
22. Proverbs 9:12-18
23. Proverbs 10:1-22
24. Proverbs 10:31-11:12
25. Mark 2:14-17
26. **Mark 8:34-9:1**
27. Proverbs 11:19-12:6
28. Proverbs 12:8-22
29. Proverbs 12:23-13:9
30. Proverbs 13:19-14:6
31. Proverbs 14:15-26

BIBLE STUDY

King Solomon is the author of the book of Proverbs from which most of the readings are taken this Lent. He was probably in his thirties when he wrote it. By this time he had demonstrated his wisdom and his kingdom was one of the most powerful nations in the Near East. Therefore, his rule gave credibility to the wisdom that he wrote in Proverbs.

A proverb is a summary statement of great universal truth expressed in simple thought. In American terms a proverb is like: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." In Near Eastern thought: "As cold water to a weary soul, so is great news from a far country." (Prov 25:25)

Sometimes the book of Proverbs seems like a large collection of seemingly unconnected two-line sayings. Actually, it is a part of a larger type of writing called "wisdom literature." Far from presenting random sayings about what to do and what not to do, wisdom offers an integrated way of looking at every aspect of life. That's not to say that wisdom directly addresses every situation we may encounter, rather, wisdom teaches us how to live according to God's will.

In Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman. Perhaps, this is because the Hebrew noun for wisdom is feminine.

Proverbs 1-9 introduces the entire book of Proverbs. It contrasts the path of wisdom that leads to life and the path of foolishness that leads to death. Vivid metaphors and stories teach us how to recognize these two ways, those who travel on them, and where they ultimately lead.

Unlike Proverbs 1-9, the large middle section of the book from 10-16 has no obvious structure. Instead, short sayings jump quickly between various topics.

It's amazing that the wisdom of Solomon has stayed relevant to every culture in every millennium since he lived. But it is perhaps even more impressive that with each reading of the book of Proverbs in our own individual lives, its truth shines on our own hearts with a fresh light, revealing something new to us each time.

As each day presents us with new challenges, Proverbs continually deepen our wisdom and understanding of how God would have us live.